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3.—*On the most promising Fields for New Exploration in Eastern Africa.*

[THE following letter was written by a Sub-committee of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, in reply to an application from the Geographical Society of Bombay. It is now printed for general information.]

IN reference to the inquiries made by the Bombay Geographical Society, it should be observed that the extent of coast whence future explorations of importance may be directed into Eastern Africa, has become considerably limited by expeditions now in progress or recently completed.

Beginning at the south, we may look upon the Nyassa as entirely in the hands of Livingstone and other Zambesi travellers, such as Count Thurnheim. Livingstone, as we know, has established easy access to the southern end of the lake, and announced his intention of exploring the whole of it at the earliest opportunity. It would be a waste of resources to direct new travellers to that same district.

Proceeding northward, the itineraries of native traders supply enough information for the present rude wants of African geography, of the country between Quiloa and Nyassa; and we have received slight but definite knowledge of the same through Röscher's ill-fated expedition, followed up as it was to some degree by the Baron von der Decken.

Taking yet another step, we arrive at the track of Burton and Speke, who have certainly left nothing of primary importance undescribed.

The fourth and last section of known country is to the eastward of Mombas, whence Baron von der Decken (accompanied by the English geologist, Mr. Thornton) has lately travelled to Kilimanjaro, and where he still proposes to travel.

Thus there is no urgent call for a new expedition that should leave the coast of Africa between the Zambesi and Mombas; but Eastern Africa is almost untouched between Mombas and the Red Sea. The field that here awaits new explorations is too vast to be exhausted by any single expedition. Three distinct undertakings may be specified.

The first is to ascend the Juba, the Ozi, and other rivers, as far as they are navigable. They have all been visited by slavers, and opposition might be experienced on entering them, partly from that cause and partly owing to hostilities between the Somaui and the Massai; but no serious obstruction need be apprehended by a well-equipped party, large enough to command respect.

The second and the most difficult would be a land exploration through the Somaui. Their language is an obstacle to a traveller from the side of Zanzibar, where interpreters cannot be engaged; while the religious and the political fanaticism of their northern tribes is an equal bar to travellers from Aden, where a suitable expeditionary party might, perhaps, be collected. The most promising course would be to land at Mogadoxo, and to reside there for some months, learning the language and acquiring a hold on the goodwill of the people, before attempting further progress.

Additional interest is given to this exploration by the fact that Lieut.-Colonel Rigby, H.B.M.'s Consul at Zanzibar, is firmly persuaded that some Englishmen are now in captivity among the Somaui; for a report to that effect has been confirmed by different witnesses. He believes them to be a part of the crew or passengers of an East Indiaman, supposed to have been wrecked near the Mauritius in 1855, but whose cargo, or rather a number of miscellaneous effects resembling those known to have been carried by her, are come into the possession of the Somaui. An exploring party would find in this report an intelligible pretext for their presence in the land, and a stimulating object for their earlier movements.

The last course would be to adopt Mombas as the headquarters, and thence

to pass into the interior by a route to the north of that travelled by the Baron von der Decken. The country behind Mombas is a less unhealthy residence than other parts of the coast; and an expeditionary party might be organised there at leisure, with help from Zanzibar. The Rev. Mr. Krapf resides in its neighbourhood; the natives are accustomed to Europeans; and the traders mostly speak Hindustani. It would be impossible at the present time to plan an exploration in Africa that would afford hope of a more interesting discovery than one leading from Mombas round the northern flank of Kenia, and thence onwards towards Gondokoro.

18th March, 1862.

4.—*Calagouk, or Curlew Island, in the Bay of Bengal, as a Sea-coast Sanitarium.* By DUNCAN MACPHERSON, M.D., Inspector-General of Hospitals, Madras Establishment.

THE Moscos, contiguous to the mouth of Tavoy River; Tavoy Island, halfway between Tavoy and Mergui; and King's Island, opposite Mergui, have come respectively under our inquiries. Of these various islands, the following is in every respect the most suitable for a sanitarium.

Curlew Island, the headquarters of the Alguada Reef lighthouse establishment, is situated in the Gulf of Martaban, 5 miles from the mainland of the Tenasserim coast, and 30 miles of Amherst Point, in lat. $15^{\circ} 52'$, and in long. $97^{\circ} 42'$. It is 8 miles long, exclusive of Cavendish Island, which lies at its extreme south end, and which is half a mile in length. The greatest breadth of the island is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile; and on its highest part, which is about 500 feet above the sea, are the "remarkable trees," a point for navigators in making the coast.

The base of the island is primary rock, the superstratum being a rich mixture of open porous soil, composed of sand and vegetable mould. Its formation is very peculiar, the northern and southern portions differing considerably. The northern half on the western side is composed of a long granite ridge, with an average perpendicular drop to the sea, varying from 250 to 300 feet. To the east the ground descends to the sea in gentle or abrupt slopes. The opposite side of the island is broken into alternate or isolated hills, with level well-raised intervening spaces, forming three bays. The first, Quarry-bay, where the stones are now being prepared for the Alguada lighthouse, is the deepest at high water; the beach is sandy, but at ebb tide an extensive mud-flat, covered in places with mangrove, is exposed: the somewhat narrowness of the channel between the island and the mainland on its side tending to the accumulation of mud.

The southern half of the island differs entirely from the northern, inasmuch as both sides are broken into bays. To the west, Retreat Bay, Rocky Bay, Sea Bay, and Fish Bay are beautiful, hard, sandy beaches, well protected by high land on each side, and open to the ocean in front, with a fine rolling surf on the beach, and only divided from one another by projecting rocky points, and from the corresponding bays on the eastern side by well-raised necks of land, sloping east and west, free from all swampy ground, and ascending north and south to the hills which divide the bays. The eastern bays look on the distant mainland, rising in bold outline on the horizon. These very much resemble the western bay; in fact differ only by the mud uncovering at half-tides, the rise and fall at spring-tides being 22 feet. All the bays on the eastern side are perfectly protected from the south-west monsoon; while during the north-east monsoon the bay on the western side, and the deep water close up to the ridge on the north, afford a free, open, and safe place for yachting